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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

MONDAY, May 22, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "THE FARM WOMAN GOES TO TOWN." Information from the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Farm women have a choice of two main ways of disposing of their home-grown products. They can put up a little roadside stand near the house and hope that the town people motoring by will see and buy their wares. Or, like Mahomet going to the mountain, they can go to town to find customers for their vegetables and fruits, their poultry and eggs, their flowers, home-cooked and home-canned foods and handicraft products.

They generally find that it is more satisfactory to organize and establish a community or curb market of their own, run cooperatively in a businesslike way, than to depend on dealings with middlemen or on places in some general market. Selling at a farm women's curb market or other type of organized market helps those who live where there is not enough motor traffic going by the door to make a roadside stand profitable.

Most reports from extension workers on farm women's markets indicate that when well run they bring in a steady cash income through the year. Customers come to know those who sell on the markets regularly and to depend on them for high grade products. Since membership in the market organization usually carries some requirement as to quality, these markets all over the country are raising the standards in home products noticeably. Extension market specialists have helped in organizing new markets and advised on the successful management of existing markets. They have held up the standards of quality and freshness demanded by

town customers and have insisted on the maintenance of this quality at all times. High quality products and attractive packaging go hand in hand. Home demonstration agents have shown farm women how to put **up their products** pleasingly.

A large variety of farm-raised products appears in the farm women's markets, depending on what grows in a given section of the country at different seasons of the year. For example, in New York State, many women have found that skill acquired through extension teaching in making ~~maple~~ cream and sugar from maple sirups has greatly increased their profits. Jellies, jams, and other foods and craft articles are sold at the Farm-Home market at the State fair, especially products that demonstrate the use of surplus products.

Perhaps you will be interested in what some other farm women have sold in their markets and what they got for their efforts. Thirteen farm women in Marion County, Missouri, organized a market in 1937, and sold fresh butter, eggs, dressed chickens, light bread and other baked goods to the tune of \$3114 in a single year.

Monroe County, Indiana, also had a farm women's market in 1937, - organized by 6 women. They sold ordinary farm and garden products on Thursdays and Saturdays, each making an average profit of \$2 to \$5 a day the year around, and added a "home craft" market about a month before Christmas to handle articles suitable for Christmas gifts, also to take orders for quilts, rugs, and chair caning.

The Farm and Home Market at Champaign, Illinois, includes a "coffee shippe" run by members who dispose of home prepared foods by this means. A different group of women plan the menu and serve each day, doing the work for that day.

The farther south one goes the more year-round gardens flourish, so it is natural to find very active farm women's markets in some of the southern states, in which large amounts of produce change hands and considerable money reaches farm women's pockets. Alabama has had curb market sales in one year reaching such

figures as \$127,000 in Montgomery County; \$110,000 in Gadsden; and \$65,000 in Tuscaloosa. The home demonstration leader tells of one woman who started 12 years ago with one cow. She paid for another in milk and butter from the first cow. Borrowed money to buy her first car to come to market and buy seed for flowers. Last year this woman sold \$500 worth of plants and flowers and \$800 worth of other things. Out of the money she has earned on the market she has run the farm and the farm home, bought her seed, and enjoyed a much better living than she had before she began to sell on the market.

An Alabama negro farmer's wife used her income to buy a pair of mules costing \$225, to feed and clothe 3 children, and buy many small articles for the home. Another woman in the same club bought 80 acres of land.

In Arkansas there is a farm woman's market at Texarkana where individual women frequently take in from \$2 to \$10 per market day. One woman who has averaged more than \$50 a month at this market says her greatest sales have come from home-ground meal, peas, homegrown flowers, and green vegetables. She shells peas and pieces quilts while in her booth waiting for customers.

Montgomery County, Kansas, has had a very successful Farm Women's Market for the past 7 years. About 15 contributors use it regularly, but 150 different women have also used it. Last year this market had total sales amounting to \$2,225.94. Ten percent of the gross returns is used for the market upkeep and sales manager's salary. This group has a rather unique plan of assigning a number to each contributor. This number appears on every article she sells and soon identifies her if she has a line of fine quality products.

North Carolina seems to lead all states in the number of curb markets-- 40 altogether, under the direction of home demonstration club members. All the markets are operated for the benefit of farm people who grow and sell their own produce. In 1937 sales amounting to \$337,681.00 were reported. Poultry and eggs led all other products in total sales, cooked foods were second, fruits and vegetables third, and dairy products fourth.

The market at Bethesda, Maryland, is the largest one in the state, and it has a wide reputation. It has received special attention from many distinguished foreign visitors, since it is close to Washington. The money received by members of this market organization has paid taxes, sent children to college, made home repairs possible, and improved the morale of almost every family participating.

